

Gratitude, like meekness, seems to belong rather to the passive than to the active virtues, and, like meekness, it also implies positive moral force in him who exercises it. The same sort of misapprehension, though not in the same degree, often exists with respect to gratitude or thankfulness, as that which so commonly exists with respect to meekness. We sometimes hear the protestation, "I do not want the gratitude of people," and we often feel the presence of the spirit which would voice itself in the words, "I hate to be grateful." There is in this case, as in the former, a want of clear discrimination and sound judgment. What is thankfulness? Not a mere gush of feeling toward one who has benefited us, nor even simply a sense of obligation because of a favor received. Gratitude roots itself in the depths of the moral nature. It implies a moral force closely akin to that which underlies meekness. It is a power of genuine and unselfish appreciation of a benefit received, and still more of the nature and intent of the benefactor. In its finest form it is a power of rightly estimating moral values. Instead of involving anything of weakness and obsequiousness, gratitude shows that moral strength which always accompanies a true perception and a true appreciation of the good. Gratitude may be selfish; it may be dominated by the sense of personal and material gain; but in its purity it is as unselfish as pure love. Its depth and fervor are measured not by the largeness of the gift received, but by the scope of the receiver's nature and his appreciation of the giver's intent.

In a word, true thankfulness is inseparable from capacity of moral appreciation. It is a large and essential element of worship, or the recognition of worthship.

In our relation to God, the spirit of thankfulness is not dependent on conditions of material prosperity or of freedom from trial. For whatever may be our immediate experiences, God is always the Good. His goodness is as manifest to the discerning eye in the discipline of sorrow and pain as in affluence of pleasures and possessions.

The call to thanksgiving is a call to earnest reflection on God's constant relation to us, and to wider and deeper appreciation of his unfailing goodness. By thankfulness the soul is greatened in capacity of moral insight and feeling. As one grows in faith by trusting, and in love by loving, so he grows in thankfulness by the exercise of his soul in grateful thoughts and emotions. "It is good to give thanks unto the Lord."

An unthankful soul is weak in the noblest virtues, because it is deficient in perception and appreciation of the highest moral excellence.

Special seasons for thanksgiving are justified by our need of deliberate exercise in this grace of gratefulness, and their best result is a broadened capacity to appreciate the divine nature and will and to appropriate the real and enduring good of life.

What winsome and ingenuous and intelligent piety flows into song in these lines of Herbert's:

"Thou hast given so much to me,  
Give one thing more,—a grateful heart.  
See how thy beggars works on thee

By art.

"He makes Thy gifts occasion more.  
And says: 'If he in this be crost,  
All Thou hast given him heretofore  
Is lost.'

"Wherefore I cry, and cry again;  
And in no quiet canst Thou be,  
Till I a thankful heart obtain

Of Thee

"Not thankful, when it pleaseth me;  
As if Thy blessings had spare days;  
But such a heart whose pulse may be  
Thy praise."

Boston, Mass.

#### WE ARE ALL HERE.

J. J. VANDERREE.

We read in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles about two of God's servants going about doing good, and instructing the people how that they might have life and have it more abundantly. These men were Paul and Silas. These were men full of the Holy Ghost, and men not easily discouraged. And why, because they knew what great responsibilities were resting upon them to preach the word as they went along, for these men were the chosen servants of the living God and of his Christ. They were to tell the people in their day that they must turn themselves from their idols, and superstitious notions, and foyisms which error had led them into. And when Paul and Silas told them how they might find the Christ and be saved, they were not ready to give up dark ideas so that the true light might come into their hearts, and that they might obey him who had previously spoken to them from heaven. No indeed. But, instead of that, they laid hands on these poor, but honest god-fearing men, and put them into prison. Yea, the good Book tells us they were thrust into the inner prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks.

What was the immediate result of all this. These servants of the most high, knowing they had only done good, did

not fail in faith in him who is abundantly able to save all who put their trust in him. Even in prison, they instead of feeling bad and giving up in despair, prayed and sang praises unto God so loud that the prisoners heard them. An earthquake followed, with doors flying wide open, bands loosed, in consequence of which the keeper supposing the prisoners were all escaped would have killed himself, but Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, "do thyself no harm: *we are all here.*" Acts 16: 28. The conversion of a whole household was the result, and lucky it was for the jailer too.

*We are all here*, dear reader, reminds me of something else. As far as our families are concerned, can we say we are *all here*? With me, the answer is *No*. Some of them sleep five thousand miles away in their lonely grave, as that of my mother, some are thirty to forty miles away, and some again right here. *Where are yours?* Some, again, have left foreign shores, away from near and dear friends, and come to a land like ours to seek freedom and plenty, all to better their condition. Many left their native shores with the hope of some day meeting their loved ones again, and gather around the hearthstone until the whole family was all there, and they could be able to say with Paul, we are all here. We that have given our hearts to the Lord, and working hard in his vineyard, and are faithful to our trust, and how pleasant it is when we can say when any work is to be done, *we are all here*, what wilt thou have me to do? For we all have a work to perform as did Paul and Silas, the finale of all which will be, if we prove faithful to the end and be found at our post of duty when the Master comes, we shall with our beloved Brother Paul receive a crown of life which the righteous Judge himself will bestow upon us as a reward for our faithfulness here in this life, and when the dead and the living from all ages, and from all time, as well as from land and sea, shall be called up to life again never more to die, and shall obey and come forth from the east and west, north and south, gathered together to him who died for them to redeem them, then will the time be when we will look around in the holy city to see who is there, God grant that we may be able to say then about reader and writer, and all their loved ones, *we are all here.*

Cornell, Ills.

MANY who are now well known in heaven attracted very little attention on earth.

THE Lord finds it hard to work through people whose religion is all in their hands.